

Get Ready To Exercise

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What you do before you exercise is almost as important as the workout itself. Stretching your muscles before jumping into your exercise routine gets your blood flowing and prevents damage to your muscle tissue.

Here are some simple warm-ups to practice:

- **Wall push.** Standing next to a wall (about 12 to 18 inches away), place hands on the wall and lean forward. Keep your heels flat on the floor as you push against the wall for a count of 10 to 20 seconds. Rest, then repeat once or twice.
- **Toe touch.** Rest one leg on a chair. Bend your other leg, then lean forward and try to touch your toes. Hold the position, without bouncing, for 10 to 20 seconds. Repeat with your other hand. Then switch legs and do it again. Perform the entire routine once or twice.
- **Lower back stretch.** Lie down on your back. Lift your knees up to your chest and hold them in place with your arms, feeling the stretch at the bottom of your back. Then relax your legs and take a few deep breaths, and repeat.
- **Side stretch.** Stand with your left arm at your side and the other above your head. Without leaning forward or back, bend to the left and feel the stretch in your right side. Hold for a few moments, then repeat to the other side.